

advocacy, support groups, or help with housing; they may also provide emergency shelter at a secret location for you and your children. Services through battered women's programs are confidential.

If you have been abused but do not want to leave your home, you can obtain a protection order that will require your partner to stay away from your house or apartment, even if it belongs to him or the lease is in his name. Call a battered women's program or the **Washington State Domestic Violence Hotline** (V/TDD) at 1-800-562-6025.

Whatever your plans are at the moment, we hope you will soon make contact with a program for abused women.

**VICTIM SERVICES**



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*What you  
should know  
about your  
abusive  
partner*

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

**for women whose  
partners or  
former partners  
are in a men's  
domestic violence  
treatment program**

**WHY DO MEN COME TO TREATMENT?**

A man may call us after his partner has left, threatened to leave, or obtained a protection order against him. In other cases, the court may have required him to attend treatment.

Unfortunately, it is often true that a man comes for counseling only because it makes him look good and convinces his partner to take him back.

**CAN HE REALLY CHANGE?**

Yes, but progress will depend on his recognizing he has a problem and his willingness to work hard on it for a long time – without expecting rewards or support from you for his efforts. Change does not occur overnight, if it occurs at all, and many men drop out along the way. Long-term improvement in behavior is more likely for a man who completes the full year's program, but even completion is no guarantee; many men continue to be violent and controlling after treatment.

Many of our clients have told us that it was only after their partners left, got a protection order, or criminal charges were filed that they realized the seriousness of their violence.

**IF HE'S SORRY, WILL HE CHANGE?**

It is common for an abusive man to be apologetic after being abusive. But this doesn't mean he'll stop being violent. In fact, many batterers have a repeating cycle with a stage of increasing abusiveness, then an incident of violence, and then a period of regret and attempts to make up.

He may make promises and apologize to get you to take him back, to drop a protection order, or to not cooperate with the prosecutor. This remorseful stage is just another tactic of his abuse and control of you, and does not lead to any lasting changes.

**IS HE VIOLENT BECAUSE HE DRINKS?**

Alcohol does not cause a man to be abusive; it just gives him a convenient excuse. If he is violent and also abuses alcohol, then he has two problems to take care of. Within days of getting off alcohol, a substance-abusing batterer typically has a period of improved behavior, and then heads rapidly back to old abusive ways. He may use his sobriety to manipulate you.

Although battering and substance abuse are two separate problems, a substance-abusing batterer is often particularly dangerous. He will have to be clean and sober in order to make any meaningful progress on his battering problem.

**SHOULD WE TRY COUPLES' COUNSELING?**

No. Couples' counseling allows him to stay focused on his criticisms of you, instead of dealing with his own problems. He may even retaliate against you physically or verbally for what you say to the counselor. You may also be put under pressure to give up certain things that are important to you in return for him giving up his violence.

Abuse is a problem in the abuser, not a problem in the relationship. For all these reasons, we rarely allow a man to be in couples' counseling while he is attending treatment.

Couples' counseling may be helpful to you in working on other problems, after he has stopped using violence or intimidation for at least 6 months, and is consistently treating you better.

**WHAT HAPPENS IN TREATMENT?**

In Washington, batterers' treatment programs must be certified by the state. This means we are expected to meet a number of requirements. In a

nutshell, the treatment goal is to increase your safety by holding the abuser accountable for his violence and for taking responsibility for changing his behavior.

The program is one year long. For a minimum of six months, he will meet with a group of other men once a week. Then he will attend a session at least once a month for six months.

WHAT IS MY ROLE?

We contact you as part of assessing how we can help you (and your children) get safe and how we can best work with our client. We contact you

Our goals for a client include:

- **LEARNING** TO IDENTIFY HIS ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR.
- **STOPPING** ALL ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR TOWARD HIS PARTNER OR CHILDREN.
- **ENDING** INTIMIDATING BEHAVIOR (THROWING THINGS, STANDING UP DURING ARGUMENTS, THREATENING, GIVING SCARY LOOKS, ETC.).
- **STOPPING** VERBAL ABUSE AND CRITICISM (NAME-CALLING, RIDICULING, YELLING, SWEARING, INSULTING).
- **CEASING** TO BLAME HIS PARTNER OR CHILDREN FOR HIS FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOR.
- **LEARNING** TO RECOGNIZE THE EFFECTS OF VIOLENCE ON FAMILY MEMBERS.
- **LEARNING** WAYS TO HANDLE CONFLICT NONABUSIVELY.
- **LEARNING** HOW HIS ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS GIVE HIM PERMISSION TO USE ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR.
- **LEARNING** TO LISTEN BETTER.

as soon as possible after he joins the program, and then periodically thereafter. We do not tell your partner anything you say unless we have your permission. In addition to our calls to you, you are also free to contact us any time for an update on his participation here; remember, though, that you are the best judge of his progress.

The client is told that he is not to discuss this partner contact with you, except to tell you that we will be calling. He is not allowed to try to influence what you tell us, or to ask you questions afterwards about it. He is not to be present while we talk to you. He is free to discuss his own sessions if he wishes.

While he attends treatment, it is not your role to give him emotional or financial support. In fact, while in the program, he must take responsibility for the abuse. You have the right to decide to limit or eliminate contact with him for any length of time if you choose to do so; we will respect any decisions you make about your relationship.

Please let us know at any time if there are other ways we can be helpful to you that we have not mentioned here.

If you have concerns about the program your partner is attending, please write to:

- **Domestic Violence Program Certification Director**  
DSHS-DCFS, P.O. Box 45710  
Olympia, WA 98504-5710

SHOULD I STAY WITH HIM?

Your first consideration should be safety for you and your children. We encourage you to get support for yourself, if it is safe to do so, through your local program for battered women.

He may pressure you to stay with him while he attends treatment; this is a tactic of abuse and control, designed to keep you from making up your own mind. If he's serious about changing, he'll respect your wishes about the relationship.Support and options for women

Please contact your nearest battered women's program to get more information about your legal rights and support services. We urge you to find out about your options regardless of whether you intend to use them at this time; it's always

best to have a plan in the event of an emergency.

It is common for a woman who is being abused and criticized by her partner to feel isolated, depressed, or even crazy; these are effects of abuse. If you are having these feelings, support from someone who understands what it is like to live with abuse and who will not judge you for your choices may be helpful to you. Assistance of this kind is available at the programs listed below. These programs can provide legal

How do I know if he is changing?

You are the best judge of whether he is changing or not. Trust your gut feelings regardless of other signs. Some of the things that we look for are:

- HAS HE COMPLETELY STOPPED SAYING AND DOING THINGS WHICH FRIGHTEN YOU?
- CAN YOU EXPRESS ANGER TOWARD HIM WITHOUT BEING PUNISHED FOR IT?
- DOES IT FEEL SAFE TO BRING UP TOPICS THAT YOU KNOW UPSET HIM?
- CAN HE LISTEN TO YOUR OPINION AND RESPECT IT EVEN WHEN HE DISAGREES?
- DOES HE RESPECT YOUR WISHES ABOUT SEX AND PHYSICAL CONTACT?
- HAS HE STOPPED EXPECTING YOU TO DO THINGS FOR HIM?
- CAN YOU SPEND TIME WITH FRIENDS WITHOUT BEING AFRAID THAT HE'LL RETALIATE?
- CAN YOU DO OTHER THINGS THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO YOU, SUCH AS GO TO SCHOOL OR GET A JOB?
- ARE YOU COMFORTABLE WITH THE WAY HE INTERACTS WITH THE CHILDREN?
- DO YOU FEEL SAFE LEAVING THEM ALONE WITH HIM?
- IS HE BEING SUPPORTIVE AND GIVING COMPLIMENTS? DOES HE LISTEN TO YOU?
- DOES HE DO HIS SHARE OF HOUSEWORK AND CHILD CARE?

Some signs he is not changing

- DOES HE USE HIS TREATMENT AGAINST YOU IN ANY WAY?
- DOES HE TELL YOU THAT YOU'RE ABUSIVE?
- IS HE PRESSURING YOU TO GO TO THERAPY FOR YOURSELF OR COUPLE'S COUNSELING FOR THE TWO OF YOU?
- DOES HE TELL YOU THAT YOU OWE ANOTHER CHANCE?
- DOES HE SAY THAT HE CAN'T CHANGE WITHOUT YOUR SUPPORT?
- DOES HE TRY TO GET YOU OR THE CHILDREN TO FEEL SORRY FOR HIM?
- DO YOU HAVE TO KEEP AFTER HIM TO ATTEND HIS SESSIONS AND STAY IN THE PROGRAM?
- IS HE MAKING HIS ABUSE SOUND LIKE A LOT LESS THAN IT REALLY IS WHEN HE TALKS ABOUT IT IN GROUP? (YOU CAN ASK HIS COUNSELORS TO DESCRIBE TO YOU WHAT HE IS REPORTING.).
- DOES HE EXPECT SOMETHING IN RETURN FROM YOU FOR THE FACT THAT HE'S ATTENDING TREATMENT?
- IS HE PRESSURING YOU TO MAKE UP YOUR MIND ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP OR TO MOVE BACK IN TOGETHER? IS HE PRESSURING YOU TO DROP YOUR PROTECTION ORDER?